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OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #0806/01 1661039
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4684
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0950
RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA 0012
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9723
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0220
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4201
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1657
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3383
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0398
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6820
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4434
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0788
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0790
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0470
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2721
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0365
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000806

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2016

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: SU SU NWAY: RELEASED TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

REF: A. RANGOON 745

[1](#)B. 05 RANGOON 1174

RANGOON 00000806 001.14 OF 002

Classified By: P/E: TLManlowe for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: NLD activist Su Su Nway emerged from her surprise June 6 release from Insein Prison committed to continue her efforts to eliminate forced labor and gain freedom for other political prisoners. She faced isolation and threats in prison, but continued to fight for human rights at every opportunity. Since her release, she has been denied access to a telephone, but if she can gain a means of communication and a tape recorder to capture government officials' denials of rights for which she fights so strongly, she is prepared to keep fighting. End summary.

A Fighter Before...

[1](#)2. (C) On June 6, authorities released Su Su Nway from Insein Prison, where she has been serving an eighteen-month sentence since October 2005 (ref B) for "obscenity" and for verbally threatening officials in the town where she brought a surprisingly successful forced labor case against local authorities. The guilty officials served short sentences, and others brought suit against Su Su Nway. Su Su Nway went directly to NLD headquarters from prison; we met her there on June 13. Her soft-spoken manner belied the strength of her convictions. She repeated what she told the press upon her release, that she would much rather have remained in prison and seen "Auntie Suu" (Aung San Suu Kyi) released instead.

...During...

13. (C) Prison authorities isolated her from other prisoners, she said, and anyone who approached her was sent to labor camps. While in prison, Su Su Nway raised issues of prisoner rights with warden Soe Tin, asking him to give time off to prisoners working seven days a week for private garment factories, to enforce the prohibition against guards carrying batons, and to prohibit swearing by guards. Her interactions with the warden, who initially told her that Insein is like a bathroom where society threw its human waste, became "nicer," she said, after she politely told him that she had heard good things about him and expected him to act correctly.

14. (C) A junior warden told Su Su Nway that a previous female prisoner who had fought for prisoner benefits had her face slashed, allegedly by other prisoners. Su Su Nway replied that she would continue to fight for the other prisoners' rights regardless. Later she found her food and water laced with camphor, which her doctor told her could cause serious or fatal health problems. The poisoning stopped after she told her brother at their next closely-monitored meeting that if she died unexpectedly, he should accuse the Department of Prisons.

...and After

15. (C) Two Special Branch officers monitor her every activity now that she is back in her village, Su Su Nway said, though visitors can avoid surveillance by coming to her house after dark. Upon her return to her village, the local ward Peace and Development Committee (PDC) chairperson refused permission for two friends who accompanied her to stay at her house. She called the township police station, and two officers came to the village, gave permission for her friends to stay, and instead took the PDC official back to the station.

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16. (C) Su Su Nway plans to donate the remainder of support funds collected on her behalf within Burma and abroad, in equal shares: to political prisoners; for the education of children of political prisoners; lawyers in the NLD Central Legal Assistance Committee who provide pro bono legal support; the NLD Central Executive Committee; and to the monks who come to NLD headquarters. She will make the all donations on June 19, Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday.

17. (C) Su Su Nway said that she takes medicine to treat her rheumatic heart disease. The NLD supplied her with medicine while she was in prison. She was planning to undergo further health tests the day she met with us.

A Fighter's Weapons

18. (C) Su Su Nway told us she will continue her fight to end forced labor and free all political prisoners and, as long as she is engaged in the struggle, "prison and I will not be strangers." She told emboffs that she has no way to communicate from her village, and even those offering public telephone services are afraid to let her use their phones. A local politician who allowed her access to his telephone before her imprisonment has since moved away. She also asked for outside support to provide a tape recorder, which she wants to use to record what officials tell her to make a record of any refusal to grant appropriate rights. Also, she has said that recording authorities sometimes prompts them to do the right thing.

19. (C) Comment: Su Su Nway is quiet, controlled and straightforward, but she exudes the confidence of someone committed to a cause and prepared to accept the potentially brutal consequences of her advocacy. International attention to her case (ref A), her detailed knowledge of her own legal rights and insistence that they be honored, and her readiness to take on violators forced the GOB to handle Su Su Nway differently from other political activists. They may

continue to allow her more space to operate than others, but Su Su Nway is determined to test those limits. If she can obtain a hand-phone and tape recorder, she plans to use them to help hold authorities accountable for their actions and continue her fight for real change from within. End comment.
STOLTZ